



# A Concerto of Confucianism and Taoism in Li Bai's Thoughts

Hua Zhang<sup>(✉)</sup> and Xiaorui Li

Mianyang Normal University, Mianyang, Sichuan, China  
34364159@qq.com

**Abstract.** Li Bai has left his glorious poems and essays for thousands of years. Exploring his poems and essays, we can find that the ideas embodied in his works are complex, among which the most important ones are Confucianism and Taoism. Li Bai's life was a positive and enterprising life. Under the influence of Confucianism's advocacy to "serve the society", he cherished the ambition of serving the country and pursued meritorious service, and this ambition never decreased a bit in his life. However, Li Bai's life is also a life of failures and setbacks. The poet has been pursuing and failing all the time. It is known that his frustration and depression are deep and extensive, and the Taoist thought of pursuing individual freedom has just become a placebo for his frustration and depression, so that he can recover from repeated defeats and continue to move forward. Confucianism and Taoism, as soon as they entered the world and were born, interacted with Li Bai and jointly made Li Bai's legend.

**Keywords:** Li Bai · Confucianism · Taoism · Concerto

## 1 Introduction

Li Bai's thoughts have long been a focus of research on Li Bai, one of the most renowned poets in Tang Dynasty. There have been controversies over the origin of Li's thoughts: "some classify them to Taoism, some maintain they originate from Confucianism, while others argue they are a Taoism-Confucianism blend or a Confucianism-Buddhism-Taoism mixture, or an eclectic fusion of Confucianism-dominated ideas" [1], which provides a glimpse into the complexity of his thoughts. Li Bai has penned his life stories in his poems, like "at age five, I learnt to read the time; at age ten, I already read books from ancient sages", "with swordsmanship at age fifteen, I visited governors to find a position", and "well-read at age fifteen, I could already write poems better than the famous poet Sima Xiangru". His poems reveal traces of Confucianism, Taoism, the school of horizontal and lateral alliances, Buddhism, and rangers, and it is his eclectic interest in different schools of thoughts that endow his poems with an air of generosity and ambition. Despite the complex origins of Li's thoughts, however, a deeper probe into his works will allow us to see that lying at the heart of his thoughts are Confucianism and Taoism. Throughout Li's life, he has the ambition to "follow the example of ancient ministers like Guan Zhong and Yan Ying, and serve the emperor". He has also

likened himself to a roc that “will amaze all with one single feat”, eager to make some unprecedented achievements for his country. By dint of his remarkable talent in literature, Li Bai won favor from Emperor Xuanzong of Tang Dynasty, who called Li Bai to the capital, “descended from the imperial carriage to welcome him” and “spooned food to him” — this marked an episode when Li approached closest to his political ambition. However, an untamed poet who could hardly friend with vulgar bureaucrats, Li soon lost favor and was dismissed from the Imperial Academy with a bunch of rewards from the emperor. Yet, always full of expectations, Li strived upwards over and over again, but all these attempts ended up in futility. Amid his attempts to pursue an official career, Li Bai once “marched to the capital while laughing out loud”, and “made a desperate move to see how things would go”, but still failed to achieve the goal of “benefit others in success”, an ultraist teaching of Confucius. Though disappointed by the failure to live up to the Confucian expectation of pursuing a political career, Li Bai did not wallow and settle for less. The author thinks that it is Taoism, which advocates free will and pursuit of freedom, that comes to the rescue of Li Bai, allowing him to stand up in spite of repeated setbacks. Li Bai's thoughts are a concerto of Confucianism and Taoism; the two conflicting schools of thoughts have found a perfect merge in Li and shaped Li's life, just like what Zizhen Gong, a poet in Qing Dynasty, said: “the thoughts of Zhuang Zi and those of Qu Yuan are not supposed to be contradictory, but it is since Li Bai that these two find ways to merge; Confucianism, Taoism, and chivalry are three distinct schools of thoughts, but they are perfectly combined in Li Bai's thoughts” [2].

## 2 The Confucian Ideal of Pursuing a Political Career as Li Bai's Lifelong Pursuit

Li's life has been a life of continued endeavors for political success. In the poem “Response to Meng Shaofu's Criticism on behalf of Mount Shou”, Li recapped his political ambition: “there is a hermit named Li from Mount E'mei, who has God-endowed charisma, upright character and strong will, and hence is really one of a kind since great sages Chao Fu and Xu You. As noble as a dragon and as composed as a turtle, Li is now living in seclusion here. He played precious zithers to play, slept on fluffy clouds, rinsed with dew and nectar, and fed on elixirs, thereby presenting youthful vigor. He has the ambition to fly beyond the limit of the sky and tour across the world. However, Li sighed in frustration and told his friend: I have not yet managed to fulfill that goal. I comforted him that one should still hold himself to a high standard in poverty, and contribute to the wellbeing of all when in success. Can I feed him with heavenly dew, shade him with green pine, and make dragons and cranes his horses to carry him up to the celestial mountain of Fangzhang and Penglai? This also failed to work it out. Then, I packed his books and zithers, and explored with him the nation-governing strategies. He can then serve the emperor to unite the whole nation and honor his dream; after that, he can lead a life like the ancient hermits Tao Zhu and Zhang Liang to tour the world care-free” [3]. The excerpt revealed two life-long pursuits of Li: one is to reach for immortality to “fly beyond the limit of the sky and tour across the world”; and the other is to pursue a political career to “explore nation-governing strategies”, “serve the emperor to unite the whole nation and honor his dream”. This sheds light on the impact of Confucianism

and Taoism on Li's thoughts. However, to "contribute to the wellbeing of all when in success" remains Li's utmost goal: only after he "serves the emperor to unite the whole nation and honor his dream" can he "lead a life like the ancient hermits Tao Zhu and Zhang Liang to tour the world care-free". In other words, Li prioritizes responsibilities and morals over his personal dreams, which is aligned with the traditional culture of China.

Throughout his life, Li has been striving to join the imperial court and contribute to his country, which is manifested in many of his works. The following are just a few fine examples:

"With broad vision, you honor your dream to save the country from chaos".

"If all follow his example and refrain from serving the country, then staying upright oneself is meaningless".

"Where to find a long sword to fight against the rebels"?

Eager to "serve the emperor to unite the whole nation and honor his dream", Li extolled the ancient heroes who had made incredible achievements in guarding their motherland, such as Jiang Shang (a founding father of Zhou Dynasty), Li Yiji (a great diplomat in early Han Dynasty), Guan Zhong (a famous prime minister of Kingdom Qi), Yan Ying (a great diplomat of Kingdom Qi), Lu Zhonglian (a great diplomat of Kingdom Qi in the Warring States Period), and Xie An (a great militarist in Eastern Jin Dynasty). In his poems, Li expressed his hope to follow the example of Xie An who "rose to the occasion for the people's sake and repulsed the enemies from Qian Qin with ease", or Lu Zhonglian who "drove back enemies from Qin by eloquence and was hence worshiped by generations after", or Li Yiji who "snatched seventy-two cities by eloquence and juggled the army of Chu and Han in his palms", which all mirrored Li's hope to "explore nation-governing strategies" and "serve the emperor".

To realize his political dream, Li Bai "left his family and toured afar with a sword" since the age of twenty-five. Along his journey, he gathered fame among the literati, and tried to curry favor with officials to win a recommendation and realize his political dream. Li Bai has more than once wrote poems to win a chance to meet local officials. When he was in central Shu (now Sichuan province in China), Li paid visits to Su Ting, who was rather impressed by his talent and generously offered accolade: "the gentleman is talented and shows undoubted gift in poetry. Though the strength of character is yet to develop, his works showcase his infinite potential. If given chances for further training, he is bound to be on par with Sima Xiangru" [3]. Thrilled and encouraged by Su's words, Li Bai prided himself on it, and claimed that "all with vision and insights will share the same opinion as Su". In Xiangyang, he visited Han Chaozong who was then the Secretary of Jinzhou, governor of Xiangzhou, and military governor of Shannan Dongdao. In "A Letter to Han", Li wrote "why not spare some time to meet me, and allow me to share my ambition?". He has also written to Pei Kuan, the then Secretary of Anzhou, saying that "I will appreciate your generosity and more assistance besides your help in the past. I will, with my sincere heart, move the Majesty, and cross Yi River like Jin Ke despite the coldness" [3]. Nonetheless, Li's efforts only won him fame and popularity, and despite his visits to the officials, no recommendations were offered; frustrated, Li Bai then came to Chang'an, the then capital of Tang Dynasty, for more chances. First to Chang'an, Li

was optimistic to achieve his ambition to “serve a sagacious emperor and return to my hometown to live in seclusion after making achievements” [3]. He asked to meet Zhang Yue, a famous poet and official then, but was declined, and then met his son Zhang Ji. However, jealous of Li's talent, Zhang Ji also refused to offer recommendation for Li. Several attempts failed later, and Li Bai began to feel the hardship of life, and hence sighed in his poem “Difficult Travel Roads”: “Travel roads difficult, difficult roads to travel; Many forks in the road, does a peaceful one exist”? Nonetheless, there is still a flame of hope in Li, as he continued to write that “like an ancient prince, want to ride the strong winds and broken waves. Raise sails to the clouds, move across deep blue seas”. Three years spent in Chang'an failed him, and Li continued to tour around. Though he could not help grumbling, he, as he wrote, “can soon find comfort after some fitful complaints” [4]. Nonetheless, Li Bai never doubted his talent and still had high confidence in his potential: in “Bringing in the Wine”, he wrote “since heaven gave the talent, let it be employed! Spin a thousand of pieces of silver, all of them come back!” And in “Ode to Liang Park”, Li wrote “Rise to the occasion like the hermit Xie'an, and it will not be late to save the world”.

Later, maybe it was because of recommendation by Princess Yuzhen, Li Bai was again called to the capital Chang'an. At that time, Li was encouraged, believing that he was going to realize his grand ambition of “make his mark across the nation and fly over Mount Kunlun like the roc”, and wrote “march to the capital while laughing out loud. Who said I am to be an obscure man forever!” These poems allowed us to see how thrilled and glad Li Bai was then [5]. After he came to Chang'an the second time, Emperor Xuanzong of Tang “descended from his imperial carriage to receive him, like meeting the old sage Qi Liji; and spooned Li on gem-made bed” (Preface to Works by Li Bai, by Li Yangbing) [3]. Li Bai was then “called to the imperial court and was free to the imperial academy” (Preface to Li Bai in Imperial Academy) [3]. However, most of his poems there were made to gloss over social problems and pay accolade to peace, which is far from what Li had expected. Li soon got tired of the life in the imperial academy, and was often slandered by the nobility because of his untamed character. He has hence more than once shared his frustration in his poems:

“Flies can easily stain a white jade, but it is always hard to find sympathetic ears to noble music. An untamed soul turns out an easy mark for slander from the jealous”.

“Song Yu has a noble heart when serving the emperor of Chu.... But the emperor finally detaches from him because of malign slanders from ill-disposed villains”.

“The beauty will invite jealous eyes, and the shameless always dares to ridicule the dignified. What is wrong with the white jade? A fly will stain it anyway”.

There are other evidences in “Preface to Works by Li Bai” by Li Yangbing: “the ill-willed are intermingled with the good and slanders the latter. The emperor hence refuses to listen to the trustworthy”. He was granted a reward to return from the Imperial Academy only one year after he came to Chang'an, and depressed, Li wrote: “Though the emperor still loves the beauty E'mei, the jealousy from others leave no room for her to stay”. By then, Li Bai missed the only chance in his life to achieve his political dream; however, instead of wallowing, Li Bai still believed that he has “the power and ability on

par with all heroes across the nation”. Post retirement from Imperial Academy, Li again started his tour around the nation, and when Prince Yong (Li Lin) enrolled Li Bai into his chamber of advisors, Li Bai considered it as another chance to fulfill his political ambition, writing that (I will) “deter the rebels and bring peace back to Tang” [7]. Most of his poems in that period showed his ambition to quell the rebellion:

“The roaring flows in rivers where the towered ship of Prince Yong has been returned to peace”.

“The southern wind will blow away the dust from the rebellion, so the army can return to Chang’an”.

“Lift up my sword to split the cloud; take my oath to repel enemies away”.

Nonetheless, Prince Yong was then framed by his brothers and died in the battlefield. Li Bai was involved and put to prison. Though fortunately saved by a friend, he was exiled to Yelang. This episode dealt a real blow to Li Bai, and nearly led him to desperation. However, his hope was rekindled after the special amnesty, and he again showed his desire to be back to the political circle. Some poems revealed his intention: “The emperor will soon recall the great strategist Jia Yi and call him back to service in the imperial court”; “the emperor still wants to read the Ode to Zixu, but Sima Xiangru expects to discuss the gist of his works”. Li Bai again visited officials for commendations, but ended up in rejection, and remaining true to his ambition, he took the initiative to join the army of Li Guangbi to fight against the rebels at the age of sixty. In his poems, he wrote, “hope that the blunt sword can still be used”, “to remove the shame of failure at Kuaiji, and repay the kindness of your highness”, but this attempt to rejoin the army also failed: “sick and sent back from the battlefield; no longer have the honor to fight with the army”. Helpless and unable to change the situation, Li Bai wrote “ambition dampened by the heaven, and now I left the capital in sighs”. Before long, Li Bai died of illness at Li Bingyang’s in Dangyang.

It is fair to say that Li has never given up his political dream, and despite the setbacks that nearly sent him to desperation, his enthusiasm never faded a bit. The Confucian ideal of pursuing a political career has been Li’s lifelong pursuit.

### 3 The Taoist Pursuit of Freedom as Li Bai’s Spiritual Sustenance

It was widely accepted that Li Bai’s thoughts were deeply entrenched in Taoism, and many maintain that Li’s plan to retire after achievements results from the interplay between Confucianism and Taoism. Most aimed to distinct which, Confucianism or Taoism, plays a dominating role in Li Bai’s thoughts. Ge Jingchun argued that Li’s thoughts is “dominated by Confucianism and supplemented by Taoism” [8]. In the author’s opinion, Li is deeply affected by both schools of thoughts: Confucianism drove him to pursue a political career and make achievements, whereas Taoism gave him inner peace and spiritual freedom. Both played an essential role in Li’s thoughts, and neglect of either will rid the glamor of Li’s life.

“To serve the emperor to unite the whole nation and honor my dream” is Li’s political ambition, whereas “to tour the world care-free tour across the country” manifests his

desire for freedom. However, his pursuit of freedom comes after his political ambition: only after he “serve the emperor and honor my dream” will he “lead a life like the ancient hermits Tao Zhu and Zhang Liang to tour the world care-free”. Li Bai has more than once showed in his poems his plan to retire after achieving political success.

“Give a flick to my sleeves and leave behind achievements, and tour the world as I wish”.

“When peace returns, tour the rivers and lakes all over the country”.

This is manifested even in the poems Li Bai wrote in his twilight years.

“Not ask for a merit for fighting against the rebels, and climb to the celestial mountain”

Aside from his pursuit of political success, the pursuit of the Taoist ideal is also central to Li Bai's life. When Li Bai left Shu and met Sima Chengzhen in Jianglin, the latter extolled that Li has “an air of sages and the style of a god”. Sima Chengzhen, a famous Taoist then, was the fourth generation of Tao Hongjing, and had been called to the imperial court by three emperors in Tang Dynasty. Emperor Xuanzong had acknowledged him as a teacher and granted him many rewards. Thus, it is not hard to see the weight that Sima Chengzhen has in the circle of Taoists. Flattered and honored by Sima's accolade, Li Bai wrote the “Ode to Roc”, in which he likened him to a roc, and Sima to a rare bird, claiming that Sima invited him to “fly and tour along”. Though deeply entrenched in Taoism, Li Bai's Taoist pursuit is not his utmost aspiration, and still eager to serve the nation, Li Bai rejected Sima's invitation. For Li Bai, leading a Taoist life is not a pursuit, but a tool, or a way, to reach freedom. Therefore, Taoism played varied roles in different periods of Li Bai's life.

In early years, Taoism was a tool for Li Bai to gather fame and make his name in the circle of literati, and this is related to the social environment then. In Tang Dynasty, the royal reigns acknowledge Lao Zi (the founder of Taoism) as their ancestor, and regard Taoism as the national religion. They offered much support for the expansion of Taoism. Emperor Xuanzong honored Lao Zi as “Dadao Jinque Xuantian Emperor”, and wrote “Interpretation of Tao Teh King” himself, and assigned Princess Yuzhen to the Taoist temple to “do the Jinzhuan fasting ritual”. Taoists generally enjoyed social recognition in Tang. Emperor Xuanzong has built a temple for Sima Chengzhen on Wangwu Mountain, and Wu Yun, a friend of Li Bai's, was also called to the imperial court for several times [9]. Against this backdrop, seeking a political career by leading a hermit-like life has become a shortcut for those with political dreams, and Li Bai, confident in his talent, is no exception.

In his youth, Li Bai lived in Bashu (now in Sichuan province in China), leading a hermit-like life and studying Taoist doctrines with some hermits and Taoist pals. In “A Letter to Pei Kuan in Anzhou”, Li wrote: “as socializing with officials turned out futile, I lived in seclusion with Dong Yanzi in the southern side of Minshan Mountain. The rural life was simple, and we did not set our feet to the bustling cities. The rare birds and fowls we raised often came to peck at the grains on our hands when called, without any trace of panic”. After gathering some fame, Li Bai began to pay visits to

local officials for recommendation. At the age of twenty-five, Li Bai left Bashu, and started a journey towards Chang'an. Over those years, he lived in seclusion like a Taoist with Yuan Danqiu, Kong Chaofu, and Wu Yun, in hopes of taking a shortcut to the imperial court by dint of Taoism. In "A Letter to Jia Shaogong", Li Bai wrote: "Bai does not intend to present a lofty character with peculiarities, but wants to live among the bustling mass, dealing with earthly affairs while living in seclusion". It is not hard to see that Li Bai's pursuit of Taoist ideal is not just for the Taoist sake. In "Response to Meng Shaofu's Criticism on behalf of Mount Shou", he claimed that "Can I feed him with heavenly dew, shade him with green pine, and make dragons and cranes his horses to carry him up to the celestial mountain of Fangzhang and Penglai?" Thus, engaging in the Taoist practice is a way for Li Bai to gain fame and approach his fulfillment of his political vision to "serve the emperor to unite the whole country and honor my dream". "Getting out" of the earthly affairs hence is to prepare for a life to "get into" the earthly life. Yet, no matter how talented he is and how popular he is among the literati, Li Bai can only be a poet for the emperor to celebrate the peace of the nation when called to Chang'an by the emperor and enrolled in the Imperial Academy. Later, he was detached from the emperor because of jealousy from others and was dismissed back home, which turned out a pity in his life. His practice of Taoist doctrines after that is not to gain fame, but a cure for his broken heart.

In fact, Li Bai only knew it too well that seeking immortality is a fruitless venture:

"Palaces in myths can occur just in dreams, and the wishes of First Emperor of Qin and Emperor Wu of Han to live forever are just illusions... Emperors who seek military feats and disregard the civilians are doomed to death. How can they become immortal like the Great Emperor Huang?"

"Illusory are the gods in heaven, and they are no more real than in the eyes of the drunk".

"Since the sages drink as well, why trouble finding an immortal god?"

Though well-aware that seeking immortality is impossible, Li Bai has more than once mentioned the pursuit of immortality in his works to vent his disappointment. In despondency, seeking immortality became a comfort for Li Bai, and a way to alleviate pains.

After returning from Chang'an, Li Bai expressed his agony over his unfulfilled political dream, and turns to seek the Taoist ideal for relief. In "Response to Wang Shier's Poem on a Cold Night", Li Bai wrote that "with a lofty character, I cannot blend with the nobility and hence is detached from the emperor. Requests to seek recommendations ended up in failure and ambition turned out unfulfilled. Yan Ziling refused to serve the Emperor of Han; then why do I bother taking my sword to show my ambition to the emperor in vain? Han Xin was demoted to be abreast with Zhou Bo and Guan Ying, and Mi Heng was ashamed to get along with butchers. Do you see the heroic spirit of Li Beihai lingers post death? Do you see the lush grass on the grave of Military Minister Pei?" Then, Li Bai sighed: "I admired the great hermit Fan Li who chose to retire despite his nation-founding feat, and now seeing all these, I resolve to stay away from politics". In "Seeing Off Li Yun at Xietiao Tower in Xuanzhou", Li Bai again could not help sharing his disappointment: "life is not always smooth sailing; why not leave the hair

disheveled and take a small boat to tour afar?" And in "Tianmu Mountain Ascended in a Dream", Li Bai wrote: "Ten thousand things run for ever like water toward the east", and "but let me, on my green slope, raise a white deer". In "A Letter to Wei Liangzai in Jiangxia after Being Sent to Yelang", Li Bai shared his grave distress: "I once wished to learn the strategies of overlords and return to hometown with honor of military feats; but the time of wars failed me and I toured afar amid rivers and mountains". However, with unfulfilled dreams, Li Bai could not lead a free life as he had planned, remained constrained by earthly affairs, and died in distress.

As the Taoist practice to seek immortality, pursue a seclusive life, and reach self-comfort alleviates his disappointment and pain, Li Bai kept moving forward despite the setbacks, but his political dream remained unfulfilled before he died. At the age of sixty, Li Bai intended to join the army of Li Guangbi, but was rejected because of illness, and later died in Li Bingyang's.

The impacts of Taoism on Li Bai's life can be concluded as follows. First, Taoism served as a way for him to gather fame and seek recommendation from local officials, and thereby reach his political goal; second, it alleviated Li's pain and agony, which is especially true when he was dismissed from the Imperial Academy; third, Taoism allowed Li to stay true to his roots and remain who he was. This can be seen in some of his poems:

"Past has been the days when I enjoy the willows and drank with the noble gentlemen in Chang'an".

"County officials are their subordinates and members in the imperial family are common friends".

"Socialize with noble officials when in the imperial court; friend with Chaofu and Xuyou when out of the court".

Du Fu, another famous poet in Tang Dynasty, admired Li Bai and praised him in poems, such as (Li) "not respond to the emperor's call, and call himself a Bacchus". It is because of the Taoist pursuit of freedom that Li Bai remained who he was and never groveled to the nobility. Even when he was seeking recommendations from officials, he maintained an independent character, so that he could win recommendations and wrote that "If you could not understand and were raged... I will ask to go to Chang'an, have a look at the imperial court, and then ride on the celestial crane. If you do not recognize my talent, why should not I turn to others?" [3]. In another poem, Li Bai again wrote: "I have the capacity to govern the nation, and the spirit of Chao Fu and Xu You. My literature expertise is high enough to change the tradition, and my learning can match the sages. However, no official position is assigned, and all will find it a pity" [3]. Though it was Li Bai who sought for recommendations, he wished that others would request him to enter the political circle, just like what he wrote: "Oh, Mr. Meng, please do not blame! And next Spring, they will ask me to stay!" [3]. Li Bai's proud and haughty character and his spirit of equality turn out to be the very reason why Li Bai failed to win favor from the nobilities despite his repeated efforts. The Taoist pursuit for immortality is a way for Li Bai to maintain his independent character, as he wrote in his poem "Oh, how can I gravely bow and scrape to men of high rank and men of high office; Who never will suffer being shown an honest-hearted face!" Therefore, some argue that Li Bai's



thoughts in early days are dominated by Confucianism and supplemented by Taoism; but later (after his failed endeavor when coming to Chang'an the first time), Confucianism and Taoism played an equally important role in his life; Taoism provided comfort and a way to alleviate his pains, and it is because of the comfort from Taoism that Li Bai continued to pursue his Confucian ideal of seeking political success.

## 4 Conclusions

Throughout Li Bai's life, Confucianism provides him a way "in", while Taoism gives him a way "out", but it turned out that Li failed in both pursuits. "Oh, I sat in my study, agonizing for long. All the time, I wished to surmount the Mount Penglai, look beyond the borders of seas, juggle the sun, shoulder the sky, and vent my distress, but to no avail" (Seeing Zhang Chengzu in Jiangxia to Luoyang in Late Spring). Though disappointed, Li Bai remained progressive in reaching for his political dream to "serve the emperor to unite the people and repel the rebels". It is because of his incessant efforts towards his political dream that he remained resolute in face of the failure of Prince Yong (Li Lin); even when approaching death, Li Bai still showed his grand political ambition in his poem: "Oh, the grand roc, flies afar to the sky but is frustrated midway. Its spirit will encourage generations to follow, and my sleeves are caught by tree branches during the tour to Fusang. The decedents will spread the news, and as Confucius is dead, who else will weep for my death?" (Song upon Death), in which he still likened him to an ambitious and powerful roc. Taoism, therefore, provides a cure for Li Bai to assuage his pains, and encourages him to reach for his political goal again and again after repeated setbacks. The author thinks that Li Bai's thoughts are a complex mixture of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, the schools of horizontal and lateral alliances, rangers, and pursuit of immortality. In the author's view, Confucianism and Taoism is the base of Li Bai's thoughts, and other schools of thoughts have also shown traces in his works, but all these serve to his political dream. In essence, Li Bai's thoughts are a concerto of Confucianism and Taoism, which accompanies him throughout his distressed but vigorous life.

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